

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2013

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

Recently, significant majorities of voters in both Washington and Colorado approved initiatives to legalize possession of marijuana in limited quantities, as well as the establishment of highly regulated licensing systems for the production and sale of this product. We understand that the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is currently considering its legal response to the passage of these state laws. As federal representatives of these states we request that your Department's course of action in this matter respect the will of the voters, and that you announce this course of action as soon as possible to assure our citizens that they will not be penalized by the federal government for activities legal under state law.

As DOJ considers its response to Washington and Colorado laws, we hope that you will exercise your significant discretionary authority by choosing not to pursue preemption of these laws, or prosecute our residents and state employees acting in compliance with these laws. In addition, we are concerned about the enforcement of banking laws on the state-regulated marijuana industry, which could result in these new businesses resorting to less-secure all-cash transactions. Our states are committed to working cooperatively with DOJ and other federal government agencies to establish robust regulatory systems that will tightly control the sale and use of this substance, prevent outflow to other states and nations, and positively impact efforts to reduce drug trafficking by eliminating opportunities for the marijuana black market (which has been associated with dangerous criminal activity).

We also urge DOJ to announce its decided course of action as soon as possible, to provide legal certainty for our citizens, businesses, and lawmakers. Both Washington and Colorado have already invested significant human and fiscal resources to establish the regulatory and taxation systems necessary to see the positive impact of our laws. Simultaneously, businesses looking to enter this new market and invest in and add jobs to our economies, are seeking the security that your decision would provide. Further delay will slow the potential for economic advancement and could lead to wasted resources, two outcomes that can be avoided with a prompt announcement by DOJ.

During a time of constrained federal resources, we believe DOJ has higher priorities than the pursuit of legal action against persons in compliance with the laws of the states. We expect and encourage your continued prosecution of activities that occur outside the bounds of state law. Our states are fully committed to continuing to work with DOJ to achieve those ends.

We appreciate the thoughtful, deliberative process through which DOJ is considering its response to these laws that have been passed by the voters in our states. We urge DOJ to expeditiously announce a course of action that will respect the will of these voters, and to work cooperatively with our states during the implementation of these laws.

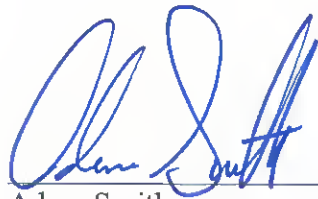
Sincerely,



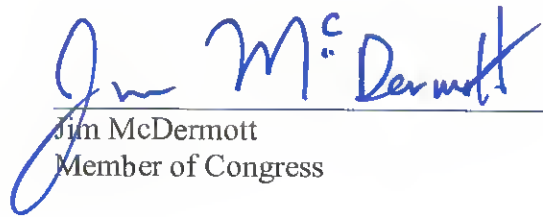
Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senate



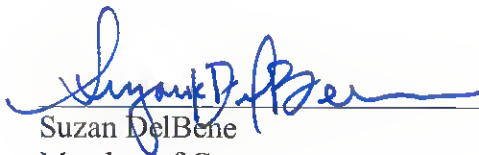
Patty Murray
U.S. Senate



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



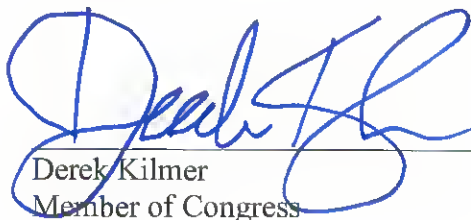
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman, U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Robert Goodlatte, Chairman, U.S. House Judiciary Committee